



May 3, 2002

The Honorable Members of the Assembly
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Assemblymember:

**SUPPORT OF ASSEMBLY BILL (AB) 2800 (CHAN)
(AS AMENDED APRIL 16, 2002)
LOCATION: ASSEMBLY FLOOR –SECOND READING– MAY 6, 2002**

The California Children and Families Commission is sponsoring and strongly supports AB 2800, which would amend Proposition 10, the 1998 initiative that increased the tax on tobacco products to promote early childhood development. We believe that making an early investment in children will help them achieve their potential in school and later in life. The Commission is in the process of implementing a School Readiness Initiative that creates supports and systems in low-performing school districts where they do not currently exist, and brings together in an integrated system those supports that do exist.

AB 2800 would make two changes to Prop 10. First, it would give the Commission the explicit authority to expend funds from its trust fund accounts for school readiness activities and programs. This change recognizes the Commission's goal of every child being ready for school, which was contemplated when Prop 10 was drafted.

Second, AB 2800 would explicitly authorize the State Commission to allocate funds from its 20 percent portion of the tax revenues to county commissions. The State Commission can maximize the influence of its policies and programs by partnering with the county commissions and by leveraging State Commission dollars with county commission dollars. For Prop 10 to be most successful, much of the State Commission's work is done in partnership with the county commissions. "Incentive" programs have been tremendously successful in putting in place statewide programs that the State Commission would otherwise not be financially able to support on its own.

Clearly, these proposed changes to statute further the provisions and purposes of Prop 10 in benefiting young children and their families. We urge your aye vote on AB 2800 and look forward to working with you and other members of the Legislature on the important "school readiness" work we share a keen interest in.

The Honorable Wilma Chan
Member of the Assembly
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If you have any questions regarding the Commission's intent with AB 2800, please do not hesitate to contact me or Patti Huston, Chief of Legislative and Governmental Affairs, at (916) 323-0056.

Sincerely,



Jane I. Henderson, Ph.D.
Executive Director

cc: The Honorable Wilma Chan
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Members of the Assembly